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What's The Deal With Childcare: Childcare As A Women's Issue - And Why It Should Matter To Everyone

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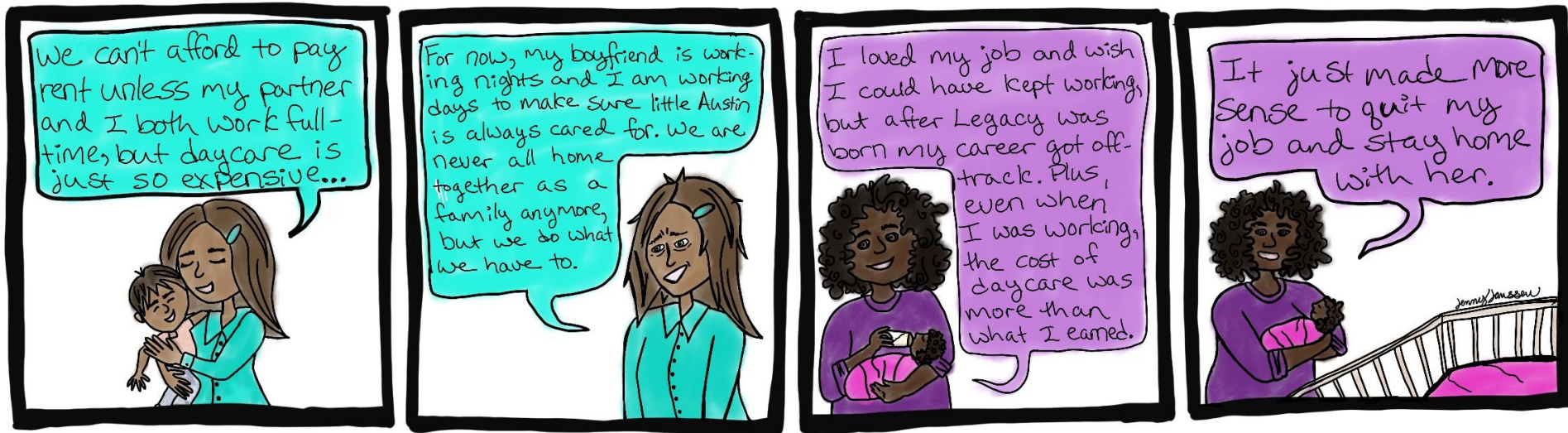
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WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH CHILDCARE?

CHILDCARE AS A WOMEN'S ISSUE - AND WHY IT SHOULD MATTER TO EVERYONE



FEMINISTS commonly point out that the primary burden of care work still falls squarely on women's shoulders here in the good old USA. Care work includes tending to young children, disabled individuals, and the elderly; as well as other care-related jobs such as cooking, cleaning, beauty and hygiene, nursing, and laundry services to name a few. Sometimes work in these fields fall under paid employment, but care work is often unpaid. Many mothers find themselves floundering under the expectation that they care for their children 24/7 in addition to continuing their careers and providing for their families financially. Many times this leads to mothers feeling haggard and overworked while struggling to make ends meet, or giving up their career entirely.

CHILDCARE IN AMERICA - WE ALL LOVE ROSIE THE RIVETER!



BUT WHO WATCHED HER KIDS WHILE SHE SERVED ON THE HOME FRONT?

MANY of us would be surprised to learn that a government-funded daycare system ever existed in America, but it did! ...for a while. After WWII when American soldiers returned home in droves, the daycare system was dissolved in order to encourage women to stay home with their children once again, thus opening up their temporary wartime jobs for veterans to go back to. During the war, it was recognized by government leaders that childcare was essential in order for mothers to work and keep the country running in the absence of the previously all-male workforce. As G.G. Wetherill put it in 1943, "The hand that holds the pneumatic riveter cannot rock the cradle at the same time." *For consideration:* Since it is commonly accepted by economists that most US households need two incomes to get by today, why isn't childcare a priority to our politicians?

CHILDCARE AROUND THE WORLD - HOW IT WORKS OUTSIDE OF AMERICA

Here in Sweden we have a program called Educare.



Young children of working parents are eligible for subsidized preschool. Children in Educare experience enriching and educational activities.



Meanwhile in the US, many families perform scheduling gymnastics just to keep the bills paid.



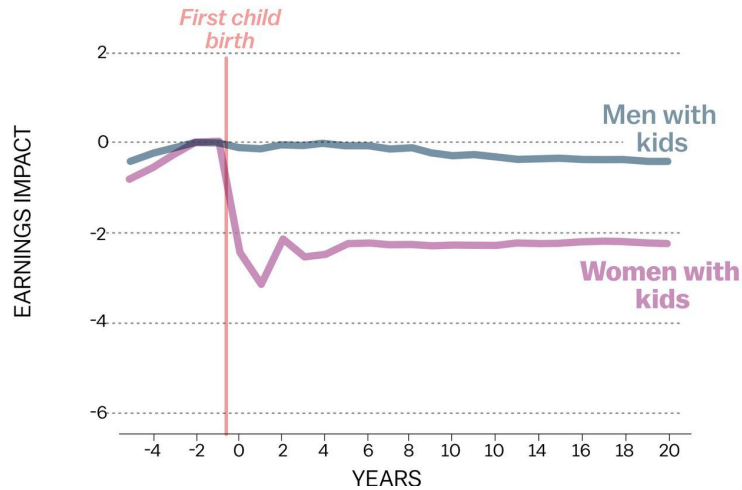
SEVERAL countries including Sweden, Spain, Germany, France, Japan, Australia, and others around the globe boast sophisticated government funded childcare programs. Pro tip America - it's time to catch up with the rest of the world. Meanwhile, the average family in the USA spends upwards of one fourth of their total income on childcare fees. *Get this:* "Full-time care for an infant at a daycare center is \$17,300 per year in King County... That's \$5,000 more than yearly in-state tuition at the UW."



PERCENT OF
INCOME SPENT
ON CHILDCARE

CHILDCARE AND THE WAGE GAP – HOW DO CHILDREN AFFECT CAREERS?

Women's earnings drop significantly after having a child. Men's don't.

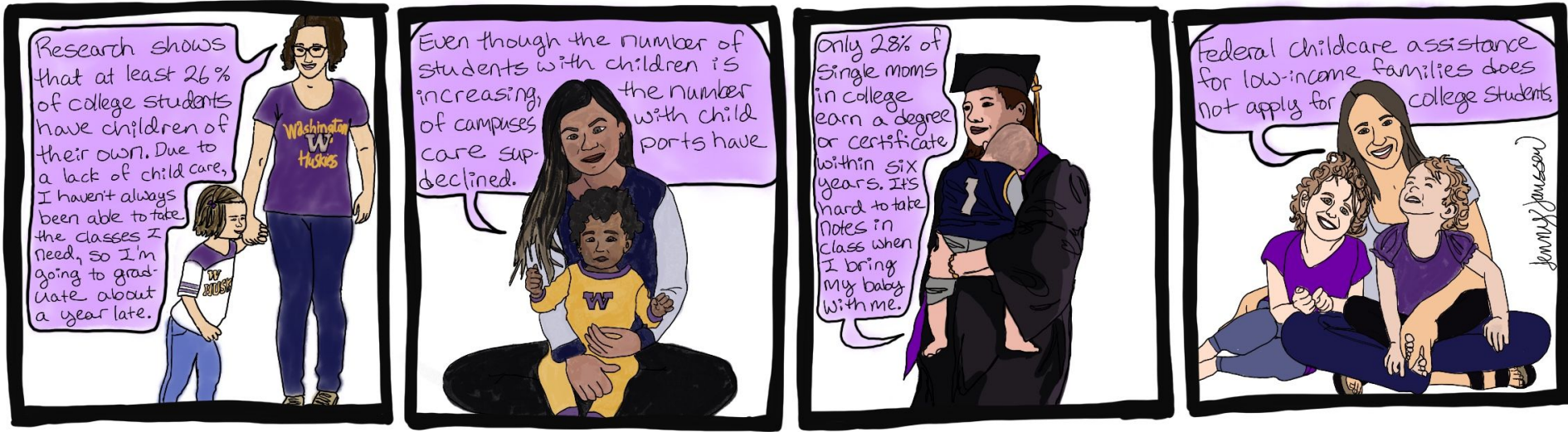


RESEARCHERS say that if men took on more child care responsibilities, it could help shrink the gender pay gap.



OUTRAGEOUS daycare expenses effectively drive many mothers out of the workforce and away from their careers – sometimes for a few years, sometimes permanently. Economists point out that lack of access to childcare is probably a major cause for the wage gap today. While women's earnings decrease significantly after the birth of a child, men's incomes stay relatively stable.

COLLEGE WITH KIDS IN TOW - THE STUDENT PARENT CONUNDRUM



EDUCATION is another of the many areas affected by access to daycare. College students with children of their own face added challenges in reaching graduation compared with their childless peers, especially in the case of single mothers. Pictured in the illustration above are several current and former UW Tacoma students with their children, describing real challenges faced by themselves and others. With more non-traditional and returning students now than ever before, institutions of higher education across the country need to address the issue of how to support student-parents. However, in order to enact lasting and widely beneficial changes on behalf of students with children, laws need to change at a federal level, and the inequalities in the very fabric of our country need to be reexamined and challenged. This is just another of many areas where a mother's ability to succeed is limited by her access to childcare.

SO WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? HERE'S WHY CHILDCARE MATTERS TO EVERYONE.

Childcare affects nearly every aspect of society. It matters to all of us.



USING other countries around the world as a comparison, we know that childcare could look very differently in America. Lack of childcare affects us all financially, economically, socially, and culturally; it affects our careers, our workforce, our educations, and the negative effects on mothers are highly disproportionate to the (little to no) effects on fathers. Lack of childcare leads to many talented women giving up or holding back their careers. Lack of childcare causes undue stress on families and relationships, and increases the primary burden of care and mental load already placed on women. Lack of childcare leads to unsatisfactory education results for female college students with children. This affects the family financially over the long term, and makes their children statistically less likely to participate in higher education. Half of the US population is limited by these implications. What if that half included the individual who could have developed new understandings in physics, or discovered the cure for cancer? *Childcare affects us all - it should matter to us all.*